

griseus), which were introduced from India to destroy rats—the vectors of plague and a pest to sugar-cane planters. The young hares (*Lepus nigricollis*) are likewise being preyed upon by the mongoose, with the result that this game animal is gradually disappearing.’

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PORT LOUIS,
MAURITIUS.

[In response to a request by the Honorary Secretary of this Society, for further information Mons. Rene Maingard replied as follows:—

‘Referring to my recent article in *Country Life* on the above subject I give you hereunder some brief notes on the occurrence of Sambar Deer in Mauritius.

Its introduction from Java dates back to the Dutch occupation of the Island. (1598-1710) since when this wild animal has thriven considerably and now roams freely in the wooded and uncultivated portions of the Island.

Some 2,500 stags are shot annually, the hunting season extending from the first Saturday in June to the first Sunday in September.

This season some 360 stags were shot on my Estate alone (the Estate is named “Yemen” and is situated in the district of Black River), the luckiest bag being on 16th August last when 81 stags were killed by a gathering of 45 guns, including a very fine and rare specimen of a 15/16 year old stag with 34 inch horns.

So far as hares are concerned, these tend to disappear for two main reasons:

1. Their unlawful hunting at night with car spotlights.
2. The destruction of the young by Mongoose (*Herpestes griseus*) also introduced from India in the last century to help destroying rats after a serious epidemic of plague in the Colony.’—Eds.]

5. OLD JUNGLE TALES RETOLD

THE TIGER AS FRUIT EATER

‘There is a forest fruit of the shape and size of a wood-apple with a very powerful, pungent, aromatic smell, which tigers and wild dogs eat greedily; this is also the favourite fruit of the *Chenchu* buffalo; but singularly enough the bear, which devours every other kind of forest fruit, will not touch it. The favourite fruit of bears and wild dogs alike is that of the female blackwood tree.’

This is taken from the article titled ‘Wild Dogs’ written by a forest officer under the name of ‘Robin Hood’ and published at page 130 of the *Journal* Vol. 10 in 1895. It is an interesting item of jungle lore which will be appreciated by a number of our members.

I have ascertained through the Conservator of Forests, Bellary Circle, that the fruit referred to is that of *Careya arborea* Roxb.,—*Dudippa* in Telegu. The blackwood is *Dalbergia latifolia* Roxb.

BUFFALOES SLAY A TIGRESS

In the same article 'Robin Hood' related the killing by a tigress of a female *Chenchu* buffalo, and the speedy retribution by the maddened herd which slew the murderer of the cow and her calf. He was at the Bairnuti Forest Inspection Shed and while sitting in the verandah one evening was looking at the herd feeding on the fallen fruit of a large fig tree which strewed the ground on the skirt of the forest a stone's throw from the shed.

'There was the "tonk" of a startled sambar, then a combined roaring and bellowing from the forest. Some of the buffaloes rushed back with dismayed snorts, stopped suddenly as if by word of command, circled round and returned to the scene of conflict. In serried ranks, like a squadron of cavalry, with their great heads lowered to the ground, and bellowing out encouragement to their fellows fighting in the forest, they swept onwards to the rescue, while I nimbly ran along in their rear with my rifle. In this order we crashed into the forest. A feeble gurgling noise announced that the buffalo had been vanquished and a hoarse roar of rage proclaimed that "stripes" refused to quit the victim. Then ensued a perfect pandemonium of roaring, bellowing, stamping and crashing in the midst of which I had to drop my rifle and shin up the nearest tree, owing to two blundering buffaloes, who could not force their way through their struggling companions in front fixing their regards upon me, and in insane delusion that I was the cause of all the turmoil, charging me savagely.'

So he lost sight of all that was going on, but after what seemed an interminable time a number of *Chenchus* arrived and with great difficulty appeased the ferocious buffaloes and got them away. The tigress was found trampled deep into the mud and gored all over. Beside it lay the carcass of an immense she-buffalo, and a yard or two away the body of her calf in defence of which she had lost her life.

I saw the Bairnuti Shed when shooting in the Nallamallai Hills in 1902 but had forgotten, or not noticed the remark about the tree fruit so made no enquiry about it.

THREE TIGERS FOUND DEAD. MAY HAVE BEEN RABIES?

'Robin Hood' further relates how no less than three tigers were found dead in the forests by *Chenchus* who averred they had been killed by wild dogs. He had only fired at one tiger, and that fifteen miles away, and did not see the carcasses as he had shifted camp. As these three tigers were found within a period of about a week may it be, in view of cases of 'Rabies in the Tiger' which have taken place in Assam, that those tigers died of rabies? Had wild dogs killed them decomposed carcasses would not have been found, for wild dogs do not leave their prey uneaten.

A LEOPARD CHILD

At a meeting of the Bombay Natural History Society held on the 7th May 1889 there was read an article by Mr. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, 'Recorded Instances of Children having been nourished by Wolves and Birds of Prey' which was published in Vol. 4 of the Society's journal at pp. 142-147.

There has been since then no particular other mention of that subject in the *Journal*, but in an article, 'The Power of Scent in Wild Animals' by the late Mr. E. C. Stuart Baker, F.Z.S., F.L.S., M.B.O.U., which appeared in Vol. 27, pp. 112-118 (1920), is related at first hand the quite unique instance of a child being nourished for several years by a female leopard in the jungles of the North Cachar Hills in Assam. That record attracted no attention, possibly because it was tucked away in an article on scenting power of animals, and is now rescued from oblivion for the interest of members.

Mr. Stuart Baker was a well known police officer, an intrepid hunter of big game, an expert ornithologist and a trained observer of natural history occurrences so not in the least likely to have been led away by the story related to him by the people of the village and backed by his personal observations and enquiries made on the spot in his official capacity. He writes:

'Before leaving the subject of feline senses it may be of interest to relate a story of a leopard child which has not yet ever been published though it was pretty well known at the time.

In the North Cachar Hills, where the boy was found, Government taxation used to consist in part of labour, so much being supplied by every village for the upkeep of roads, rest-houses, etc. Sometimes men would petition for exemption from this labour on various grounds, and one day when questioning a man as to why he wanted exemption from such labour he told me that he had a little "wild" son to look after and as his wife had recently died he could not leave the village to work or the boy would run back to the jungle.

I accordingly went outside the court to see the "wild child" and satisfy myself as to the truth of the story. There sure enough outside was a small boy about seven years old, or less, squatted on the ground like a small animal; directly I came near him he put his head in the air and sniffed about, finishing by bolting on all fours to his father between whose legs he backed like a small wild beast retreating into a burrow. Looking closer at the child I saw that he was nearly or entirely blind from some form of cataract and his little body was covered with the white scars of innumerable healed tiny cuts and scratches. Struck with his appearance I asked the father to tell me all about the boy and he then narrated the following wonderful story which I fully believe to be true, but which my readers must accept or not as they think fit.

It appears that about five years before I saw father and son, the Cachar villagers of a village called Dihungi, had found two leopard cubs close to the village which they killed. The mother leopard had tracked the murderers of her children back to the village and had haunted the outskirts for two days. The third day a woman cutting rice in some cultivation close to the village laid her baby down on a cloth while she went on with her work. Presently, hearing a cry, she turned round and saw a leopard bounding away and carrying the child with it. The whole village at once turned out and hunted for leopard and baby but without success, and finally they were forced by darkness to leave the boy, as they supposed, to be eaten by the leopard.

Some three years after this event a leopardess was killed close to the village by a sportsman who brought in news of his success

together with the information that the leopard had cubs which he failed to secure. On hearing this the whole village turned out and eventually captured two cubs and one child, the boy of this story. He was at once identified by his parents, claimed by them, and their claim admitted by the whole village.

Subsequently when visiting Dihungi I interviewed the headman and also the man who actually caught the child, and they both corroborated the father's tale in every detail. It appears that at the time he was caught the child ran on all fours almost as fast as an adult man could run, whilst in dodging in and out of bushes and other obstacles he was much cleverer and quicker. At that time he was only suffering from cataract to a slight extent and could see fairly well, but after he was caught his eyes became rapidly worse. His knees, even when I saw him and he had learnt to move about upright to a great extent had hard callosities on them and his toes were retained upright, almost at right angles to his instep. The palms of his hands and pads of toes and thumbs were also covered with very tough horny skin. When first caught he bit and fought with everyone who came within reach of him and although even then affected in his eyes, any wretched fowl which came within his reach was seized, torn to pieces and eaten with extraordinary rapidity.

When brought before me he had been more or less tamed, walked upright except when startled into extra rapid motion, was friendly with his own villagers, whom he seemed to know by scent, would eat rice, vegetables, etc., and consented to sleep in his father's hut at night. Clothes, being a Cachari child of tender years, he had not been introduced to.

His blindness was not in any way due to his treatment by the leopard—if the story is true—as I found that another child, a couple of years older, and the mother also both had the same cataract. At the same time the defective sense of sight may well have intensified his sense of smell as the loss of one must have caused him to rely more on the other. When caught the child was in perfect condition, thin but well covered, and with a quite exceptional development of muscle.'

BANGALORE,
August 13, 1950.

R. W. BURTON
Lt.-Col., I.A. (Retd.).

6. THRILLS IN SPORT

The question of the greatest thrills in sport is often discussed by sportsmen. One will say, after a brief reference to a right and left at woodcock, or the fall of a stag that he considers the finest of all is the first pull and rush of a salmon; another, his thoughts further afield, recalls the close approach to a dangerous rogue elephant or a wounded and savage buffalo as the greatest thrills in his experience.

The subject is interesting to anyone who has enjoyed various forms of sport, and has given me food for thought at various times. I consider from my own experience that the thrill afforded by the rush